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AN
EXAMINATION
OF THE

Signs of the Times

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OF THE

ARTS OF THE LIBRARY



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OF THE
Signs of the Times:
OR,
Seasonable Remarks

ON
Mr. *MASSER*'s SERMON.

PROVING
That 'tis an Unscriptural,
Prevaricating and Seditious LIBEL.

By JAMES SMITH, B. D.

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Printed, and Sold by J. ROBERTS, in
Warwick-Lane, MDCCXXII.

Price Six-Pence.

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EXAMINATION
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Signs of the Times.

THE Sermon preach'd by the Reverend Mr. Massey, before the Lord-Mayor, on the Day appointed by the Government, for a General Fast, being now, at the Desire of the said Lord-Mayor made Publick; I am willing to believe, that that Gentleman, out of his abundant Christian Charity, will heartily forgive my Procedure, if I take under Examination some few Passages in the said Discourse. The Liberty he takes, in censuring the Writings and Practices of his Superiours, ought not in Reason to be denied by him to others, whose Claims
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and Pretensions to this Priviledge, are every way as allowable, if not more reasonable. Wherever therefore, I find him either advancing any thing against sound and substantial Reason, propoling what is repugnant to the exprels and reveal'd Will of God, prevaricating from what he once propos'd, or deviating from the Rules of good Manners; This reverend Preacher must excuse me if I throw in my Remarks,

SUCH is the Spirit of Faction, such the Desire of being distinguish'd as a Party-Man, and such the Fondness of Applause, and the Hopes of Gain, that the Place appointed entirely for the Worship of the Almighty, is prostituted for the Rehearsal of treasonable Harangues to such a Degree, that the Devotion which ought to be paid to the great Creator of all things, is turn'd into the Service of the Devil; and the Attention of the People, which should be fix'd alone upon the Precepts of the eternal Author of our Being, is rais'd from thence, and applied to the gathering of the Seeds of Sedition, Scandal, and Rebellion. If the Ministers of the Gospel are truly desirous of being esteem'd the Embassadors of Christ, and the Followers of the holy Jesus; if they design
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by their Discourses to improve the Ignorant, and demonstrate that they are really convinc'd of the Truth of what they intend to teach, they shou'd in every respect so behave themselves, that others beholding their good Deportment, may glorify God whose chosen Servants they are, and thereby be encouraged to follow their bright Example. How far this Gentleman, who was appointed as Preacher upon this solemn Occasion, has conform'd himself to this allowed Rule, will in some Measure appear to the World, by the following Remarks.

OUR Author, P. 1. informs us, that the National Character of the Jews, by the Prophet, is, *that they made an ill Use of all God's Blessings both Spiritual and Temporal; that they were incorrigible; that they turn'd his Grace into Wantonness; that their Luxury had brought forth Atheism and Infidelity; that they had introduc'd great Abuses in the Civil State, and were pleas'd with the general Corruption of the Ecclesiastical.* And in P. 25. He is afraid that he does his Country no Wrong in affirming that these Sins which the Text threatens to visit for, are at as great an Height among us now, as among the Jews, in the Time of Jeremiah. But when
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he is to speak of these in Particular, he scarcely makes any the least Mention, either of the great Abuses introduced into the Civil State, or of the Corruption of the Ecclesiastical. However, any who will give themselves the Trouble of reading over P. 20, will be readily apprised of what he intends by the great Abuses of the Civil State, namely, the present happy Establishment of the Government founded on the late glorious Revolution, and the Principle of resisting a Tyrannical and Arbitrary Power. It may be readily understood why he has not thought fit to express his Mind free, viz. lest a more open Discourse might render him liable to the Censures of the Magistracy. Short Hints and sly Innuendoes are sufficient for the present Purpose, where other Methods are not to be made Use of; the Furious and Disaffected, like Touchwood, readily receiving the first and slightest Impression. But why our Author's Zeal should be brow-beaten, why out of Dastardly Fear he should be prevented from blowing the Trumpet of the Lord in Zion, and crying aloud against the illegal Rulers of the People, is somewhat surprising, since by himself such Forbearance is P. 16. number'd in that black List of Sins for which the Pro-

Prophet threatned a Visitation to the People of the *Jewish* Nation, the contrary of which, as he intimates, P. 30. he readily would engage in, had he a favourable Opportunity of Preaching before the Government. That in this Particular, I have not done him any Injustice, by drawing Consequences that cannot be allowed, will, if I be not very much mistaken, evidently appear by the following Observations.

IN P. 13. He is pleas'd to tell us, *He who hath no Hope in God, is of all Men the least able to support himself, and therefore stands in Need of more external Aid and Assistance than other People, and consequently they must compass Sea and Land to accomplish their Design.* This (he tells us) the Prophet calls setting a Trap, and catching Men. And a little below he proceeds, *Again, He who employs his Learning or Counsel to seduce or mislead Men, or his Power and Authority to intimidate or affright them, or the Agreeableness of his Conversation to persuade or entice them to act contrary to their Duty or Interest, as in the Case of Publick Elections, is too commonly done, sets so many Traps, and catches Men.* As there is a Thousand other Instances abundantly more to the Purpose than this which our Au-

thor has pitch'd upon, in Order to shew in what Cases the Wicked trap and catch Men, one would be apt to think, that they should have been rather chosen: But they would not have been so much for his Purpose. It was therefore necessary to hale in this by Head and Shoulders, because of the present Expectation of a New Parliament, by which a considerable Party is spirited with Views of having their wicked and imprudent Desires accomplished. But as the Good of the whole Community is abundantly rather to be regarded, than the private Interest of any Faction or Party; so I hope, every Englishman will have that alone at Heart, and be no Way engag'd to act contrary to the Peace and Welfare of their Country.

IN P. 20. Our Reverend Preacher informs us, that *from the Sins of the People proceed the Springs of their late Disappointments and Defeat in their Enterprizes. Hence it comes, that the Children are ejected, and Strangers divide the Inheritance. Hence we have seen Princes become Vagabonds, and beg their Bread, and Nobles seek it out of desolate Places.* I assure this Gentleman, that these Particulars are so far from being Judgments upon this Nation,

tion, that they are its only Mercy. If no other Misfortune befall *Great Britain* and *Ireland* than these which he accounts their greatest Calamity, we have not in the least, any Occasion to grieve at the Loss, but rather adore the Divine Goodness for such wonderful Blessings. Happy, thrice happy are the *British* and *Irish* Nations, that the late abominable Rebellion against his sacred Majesty King *George*, has been suppress'd; that Treasonable Enterprizes have been discovered; that a *Po-pish* Pretender to the Crown of these Realms, is in all Probability, for ever under an Incapacity of accomplishing his Designs; and that a Duke or two, with some others, who basely betray'd their Country, and villainously entred into a Treasonable Conspiracy against their right-ful Sovereign, are exil'd from their Na-tive Country, and beg their Bread in di-stant Lands.

I readily agree with our Author, P. 26, that the taking of God's Name in vain, in Acts of deliberate Perjury, is an abominable Crime, and such as calls down the Vengeance of God upon us; and therefore wish that this too frequent Practice was for ever banish'd from among Men,

But that this is mostly practis'd by Gentlemen of his Profession, I mean such as are in holy Orders, as also such as espouse the Principles he betrays, is too plain and evident to be deny'd. How many have we seen take the Oath of Allegiance to his Majesty King George, and yet openly preach Rebellion, and sow Sedition? What Numbers may be met with in this Party, who, after taking the Oaths, have in a ludicrous and Atheistical Air call'd for a Vomit to throw them up again. If the Name of the Great God is to be reverenc'd; if the taking an Oath be a religious and solemn Act; and if Perjury be a horrid and detestable Crime, how comes it, that the Teachers of the People put it in Practice? and rather than lose a good Living, swear Allegiance to a Prince whom they detest, against whom they sow Sedition, and stir up Rebellion, not only in their private Conversation, but publick Harangues, whom they call *a Stranger that divides the Inheritance, when the Children are ejected?* How comes it that the Ambassador of Christ is the Venter of Treason, and shows his Dislike to the present Establishment by his Uneasiness that a *Popish Prince is a Vagabond?* that Nobles who were perjur'd, and Betrayers of their

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Religion and Country, should seek their Bread out of desolate Places? that Rebellion has met with a Defeat, and that Treasonable Enterprizes against his present Majesty, have had Disappointments? By these Instances it is evident what a Regard the Gentlemen of this Perswasion have for the awful Name of the Almighty; what a Sense they entertain of an Oath, and what a trivial Matter Perjury is in their Account. When thus qualify'd, what will they not enterprize? and when they thus practise who are the Instructors of the People, what may not be expected from the People themselves?

IN P. 31. Our Reverend Divine thinks it proper to acquaint us, That, if Christ's Kingdom be not of this World; that is, if he has left no visible Human Authority, to govern his People as such, then there lies no Obligation upon any Man to submit, either to Magistrates or Ministers, for Conscience sake. I know, that the Premises are true, but the Conclusion is false. Christ himself has expressly told us, That his Kingdom is not of this World; therefore we are to believe him, since he best knew what he design'd to establish. His Kingdom is not Secular; he operates upon the Mind,
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not by civil Force and Power, but by convincing the Understanding with Reason, and thereby inclining the Will. He disclaim'd all such Authority, and coercive Power, and forbad his Apostles to lay claim to any secular Compulsion, Violence, and Restraint. And to demonstrate, that such was contrary to his Will, he has left us a remarkable Example in his own Practice; for when he was not receiv'd by a Set of Hereticks and Schismatics, from the Jewish Religion, he altogether abstain'd from the Use of the avenging Power, and rebuked the Rage and furious Zeal of the Apostle, who importun'd him to call down Fire to devour these Infidels. Had there not been any such Injunctions, or this Example of this mild Disposition of treating those whose Opinions are not conformable to our own, our Reason would have been sufficient to inform us, that coercive Power and secular Compulsion can never convince the Understanding, and therefore no Way engage the Will, which always is guided by the former. As none is answerable for the Actions of another, so every one is to be actuated in these Affairs by the Determinations of his own Mind: Therefore to force the Tongue to express what is contrary to the Understanding,

ing, is to rob the Soul of that Liberty which God hath bestow'd to Rational Creatures, and something too barbarous to be allow'd by Human Nature. The Minds of Men are as various as their Complexions and Features, and the Faculties of the Soul are always according to the Structure and Disposition of the Solids, and the different Consistence and Motion of the Fluids, the former of which are entirely out of the Power of Man. It therefore follows, that it is as unreasonable to punish or imprison them because their Sentiments are not conformable to the Notions of others, as 'tis to abuse one because his Features happen to be different from yours. Since therefore Christ has not left behind him any infallible Judge of Controversies; since he has not appointed any Inquisition; since he has recommended to us the Liberty of judging for our selves, by ordering us *to search the Scriptures*, which testify concerning him; since the Apostles, in Imitation of him, have prais'd the *Bereans* for their Diligence in this Particular; and the Voice of Reason approves and confirms this Procedure, 'tis undeniable, that *the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World*, or that he has left no Authority to any to make Use of secular and coercive Power in religious

gious Affairs! Had not every Person been allow'd to form a Judgment for himself in such Cases, the blessed Jesus would have transmitted to us no such Injunction; neither would the Apostles have given such an Encomium. Upon this Principle the Reformation began, and upon this it was happily establish'd; and by this very Principle, those who separate from our Communion, enjoy a Toleration. Had not this Principle been embraced, Christianity had never prevail'd; but to this Day, Heathenism and Infidelity would have overspread *Europe*. Had our Reformers been of the same Opinion with this Gentleman, to this Hour we should have given up our Senles and Reason to a pretended Infallible Guide. At this Time *Popery*, with all its horrid Train of Image-Worship, Indulgences, Works of Supererogation, Purgatory, Transubstantiation, Praying to Saints and Angels, worshipping the Host, &c. would have still prevail'd, and the Persecution of the poor Dissenters for Conscience Sake, the Darling Article of the High-Church Creed, would have been as much in Fashion in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, as that of the Protestants in the *Spanish Inquisition*. Since therefore, as I have already hinted, the Law of Nature forbids
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to hurt or destroy our Fellow Creatures; and since by Divine Revelation we are commanded to love even our Enemies, to bear with one another, to instruct with Mildness, following the Example of the meek and humble Jesus, who informs us, that he *came not to destroy, but to save Mens Lives*, as also that of his Apostles: such should be the Disposition of Mind, such should be the Practice of all, particularly of those who pretend to be call'd to, be the Stewards of God and the Dispensers of his Sacraments. But how far they renounce the Commandments of their great Master, how much they reject the Instructions of his Apostles, and how much they counteract his, and his Apostles Example, may evidently appear by their eager Desires of unlimited Authority, their vain and idle Pretensions of being the only proper Judges in religious Controversies, to whom the ignorant and insignificant Laity are to resign their Senses and Reason, their horrid Outcry against Liberty of Conscience, and their Spirit of Persecution, by which they are hurried to oppress and enslave the Understanding of others, to force their Wills, to ruin their Fortunes, and imprison their Bodies.

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That the Conclusion is false; is as evident. All Certainty must allow that there is a prodigious Difference between yielding Obedience to such Laws of the Magistrate as are established for the Preservation of the Civil State, for the Good of the Society, and for due Regulation of the Moral Actions of the Subject; and such, as the State, byas'd by ignorant domineering and selfish Priests think proper to constitute, to enslave Mens Consciences, in commanding them to give their Assent and Consent to such and such Creeds, Articles of Faith, and Explication of Articles, to such and such Modes and Forms of Worship, and to such and such Church-Discipline, as ordered and commanded by the Eternal Being in his reveal'd Law, which God either has not commanded at all, or which he has expressly forbid, or which the Understanding and Consciences of Men cannot possibly conceive, as so order'd by him.

In the former Case it is the incumbent Duty of every Subject to submit himself to every Ordinance of Men, not for Wrath, but Conscience Sake, because the Magistrate in these Circumstances acts according to the Commandments of the Almighty, and the
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Ends for which he was constituted : namely the Good of the Community in general, the Suppression of Vice and Encouragement of Virtue, the Punishment of evil Doers, and the Reward and Praise of them who do well. But in the latter, to give up our Understandings without proper Conviction, to enslave our Consciences at the Discretion of an ignorant and peremptory Priest, to resign our Wills upon an *ipse dixit*, without the Support of Reason, is such a Method of Acting as plainly demonstrates that we renounce our Nature, deny our selves to be intelligent or rational Beings, and consequently rather Brute Creatures void of Understanding, than Men to whom God has given the Faculties of Perception and Judgment. The beneficent Author of the Universe has bestowed these Talents, not to be buried or hid in a Napkin, or to be deliver'd up to every bold Invader of our Properties, but to be exercised and employed in the Search of Truth. The blessed Jesus, after he had risen, appeals to the Senses of his Disciples for the Truth of his Resurrection, and the Reality of his Natural Body that was crucify'd ; upon which Foundation the whole of the Christian Dispensation stands. But the *Papists*, to advance and support their

absurd and irrational Article of Transubstantiation, deny, that the Senses should be employed or believed in their Representation of their proper Objects; by Means of which, they have contributed, what in their Power lay, towards the Destruction of Christianity, by sapping the Basis and Foundation of it, namely, the Resurrection of Christ, and the Introduction of Atheism, Deism, and Irreligion. In like manner, the blessed Jesus has commanded his Followers to search the Scriptures, and the Apostles have ordered us to *try the Spirits, whether they be of God, and not to be carried away with every Wind of Doctrine, or the Slight of cunning Men, who lie in wait to deceive*; which is a plain Appeal to our Reason and Conscience, and a positive Command for the diligent Exercise or use of them. But our High-Church Clergy, true Followers of the Popish Priests, too desirous of the Ignorance and Indolence of the Laity, over whom, they eagerly covet, both spiritual and secular Authority; oppose this Precept of our Blessed Saviour, affirm, that they are the only proper Judges of religious Controversies, deny Mankind the Liberty of judging for themselves; impose new Modes and Forms of Worship, no where

where to be found in the holy Scriptures ; obtrude upon us such Explications, as are repugnant, both to the reveal'd Laws of God, and Reason ; and would fain force us, by Fines and Imprisonments, to allow such Matters, to be the Commands of the Eternal, which our Reason cannot comprehend, to be either expressly contain'd in, or fairly deducible from his revealed Will. If such a Procedure as this is just, than the Nature of Good is no way different from that of Evil ; and that, which in its Essence is really wicked, may be allowable.

SINCE we are to obey God, rather than Man ; since what ever is not of Faith is Sin ; and since whoever does Evil that Good may come of it, his Damnation is just. It we contrary to our Consciences, or without a proper Conviction of the Understanding, be found shamefully complying, we are guilty of a most enormous Crime, both against God, our selves, and others. Now I'll refer it to the Variety of the Writings of the High-Church Clergy, and in particular to this Sermon under Examination, if this Sin be not approved of and commanded. Was the Principle of this Ambassadour of Christ to
take

take Place, what unhappy Circumstances should we be immediately in? How soon would Learning and Knowledge be banish'd from among Men, and the thick Clouds of Ignorance, more dismal than Cimmerian Darkness overspread the Land? And is it not upon this, that Popery flourishes, and the *Spanish* Inquisition has its Foundation?

By what has been propos'd upon this Topic, the falsehood of what he has advanc'd, P. 33. may be very apparent. I say it directly tends to Popery, for if all Restraint be taken away, and all Men are suffered to follow their own Inventions, the least wise, which is always the greatest Part of Mankind, will, at last, weary with wandering, and not knowing either, how to fix or return, be glad to throw it self under the Protection of an Infallible Guide. Now I refer it to the Judgment of any Men of common Understanding, to determine whether there be any the least probability, that a Protestant, who makes use of his Reason, in the Search after Truth, can out of a pettish Humour renounce his Senses, and abandon his Reason, in order to find a *Requiem* and Indolence for his wearied Mind, in the midst of that horrid Fund

Fund of Nonsense, Superstition, and Idolatry, which is to be met with in the *Roman Church*. Can a Man while exercising the Faculties of his Soul, (which as all know are gradually improv'd, the more they are us'd) and truly appriz'd, that Infallibility, which is an incommunicable Attribute of the great and glorious God, imagine that is to be found in an ignorant or frail Man, or in a Society made up of those, who cannot attain to a perfect, or adequate Knowledge of any the most minute or inconsiderable Particle of Matter? Or can such as search the Scriptures, and judge for themselves, think, that 'tis in the Power of any on Earth to forgive Sins, to transfer the good Works of some, like South-Sea Stock to others, for a proper Sum, or grant Indulgences, as he shall think fit. When the opposite Propositions of a Contradiction happen to be both true, this may also come to pass, but scarcely till then.

That this Doctrine therefore, wherein is asserted, that *the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World*, but spiritual, convincing the Mind by Reason, and not by Force of Arms, Oppression and Restraint; that Mankind has a Liberty granted them by God,
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to search the Scriptures, and Judge for themselves; that Christ has left no infallible Guide behind him, by whose Determinations we are to Act, that the Clergy of any Denomination whatsoever, are neither infallible, nor the only proper Judges of religious Controversies. That Christ has not given any Authority to the Clergy or civil Magistracy, to make use of coercive Force or Restraint, to enslave the Understanding, Bias the Will in Articles of Faith contrary to their Reason: That the liberty of judging, has not any the least Tendency to incline People to Popery; and that the Compliance of the Will to any Article of Faith, which is not fairly and clearly contain'd in the holy Scriptures, or contrary to sound substantial Reason, is an heinous Offence against the Commands of Christ and his Apostles, and contrary to their constant Practice, is a true and evangelical Doctrine, and that the contrary of all this maintain'd by our Preacher, and the High-Church Clergy, is a false and destructive Principle, entirely opposite to the common Sense of Mankind, and the Rule of our Faith, is so very Evident, that I should affront my Reader, and abuse my Time, if I should insist any longer on it.

I f several Enormities be alledged, as
 the Conſequences of this Doctrin: Theſe
 cannot be any ſolid Arguments againſt
 it. For I can't comprehend why Reaſon
 ſhould be laid aſide, becauſe forſooth, it
 may be prostituted to ſome vile Purpoſes:
 Or why any thing truly valuable in itſelf,
 ſhould be diſcarded upon the account of
 ſome accidental Miſuſage. The beſt of
 Things are liable to be abus'd, muſt
 they therefore be brought into diſuſe?
 No ſurely: For ſhould this Poſition take
 place, we ſhould be ſoon obliged to bid
 a final adieu to every thing that is really
 Praise-worthy, Juſt and Good. The Pa-
 piſts affirm that the free Uſe of the Scrip-
 tures, is the Source of all the Heresies
 that ariſe, and on this Account, they for-
 bid the Laity the Reading of them. Will
 therefore the Reverend Mr. Maſſey join
 Hands with theſe, and aſſert this Reſtraint
 to be allowable? In the like manner
 this Preacher tells us, the Doctrin above-
 mentioned, is the Cauſe of the Growth
 of Schiſms and Heresies, and therefore,
 that it ought not to be maintain'd, which
 in every Reſpect, is the ſame Concluſion
 with the former, and drawn from the
 ſame Premiſes. Let me for a Moment
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expostulate the Matter with this Heroe for the Popish Cause, and demand a recital of the particular Circumstances, in which these two are different, which, if he cannot (as I am almost persuaded he can't) propose; I wou'd demand in the second Place, since he is so much in the Interest of the Popish Function, how it comes that he does not renounce that Heresy, which he now pretends to adhere to, and not under the Umbrage of a faithful Son of the Church of *England*, gnaw the Bowels of his Mother; fatten upon her Revenues, and say, the Foundation, upon which she, and all the reformed Churches stand, Namely the Doctrine, *that the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World, that Mankind have a Liberty of judging for themselves, and that the Consciences of Men are not to be enslav'd by Compulsion.* If he be not such, as he fairly represents himself to be; he expresses himself in publick after this manner, either because he is ignorant of the Mind of his Master, and the common Principles of human Reason: Or he thus Acts with some sinister View of Interest. As to the former, 'tis surprizing to me, that a Man of liberal Education,

cation, and a Presbyter of a Protestant Church, should be unacquainted with the revealed Will of him, whose Minister he is, as incapable to determine in an Affair, which is obvious to the common Sense of Mankind. As to the latter, 'tis somewhat too base to be harbour'd in the Breast of a Clergy-Man, who has thought fit to inform us, that he disclaims all Hypocrisy.

I must confess, that it is to be very much to be lamented, that there are so many various Sectaries and Opinions amongst us who are Protestants: However, of all that have as yet been broached, there is none more detestable than that of the *Arians* and *Socinians*, who in direct Opposition to express Revelation, deny the Divinity, and Mediatorial Satisfaction of our blessed Saviour. For this Scheme, either of the one or other being in very few Circumstances, different from that of the *Jews*, if theirs be just, the New Dispensation of the Lord Jesus is false; the Books that contain it, are lying Legends; our blessed Lord is an Impostor, and set upon a worse Foot than *Numa* or *Mahomet*, and consequently the whole of Christianity is a cheat,

Whether the Gentlemen who Embrace, and Defend the Scheme of either of these Heresies, with a trifling and insignificant Shew of Reason intend this, I will not determine, because I hope better things of them, but this I will venture to affirm, that what I have now propos'd, are as fairly deducible from their Doctrine and Tenets, as any one Conclusion from propos'd Premises.

THAT these Heretical Doctrines are so much in Vogue, that the Abettors and Defenders, are so much caress'd and applauded, for the faint Appearance of Wit and Reason, that is discernable by some in their silly and trifling Libels, and that the Patrons and Authors of them are Benefic'd and countenanc'd by some in Power, is I allow, a Matter of great concern. But who are the broachers of such Heresies, who the Defenders and Patrons of them but the Clergy? Are they of the Laity, that are engag'd in this Cause? No. None of these, as far as I know, excepting one, I mean *Toland*, whose ignorant and infamous Pen, has long since been employed in this abominable way. No, 'tis

'tis the Clergy, who either by their Ignorance stumble upon these imaginary *Chimeras*, or by their Villany, Pride, Conceit, or Ambition, invent, publish, and support these, and a large Catalogue of other wild, inconsistent and pernicious Notions, by which they sow Sedition, encourage Strife and Rebellion, disturb the Minds of sober and well-disposed People, and give them such false and low Apprehensions of the Creator of the Universe, and his eternal Son the blessed Jesus, that they often stagger in their Faith, and deviate from the Word of Truth. In a word, 'tis the Clergy of all Denominations, who by their Ignorance, their Laziness, and unfaithful Attendance upon the Duties of their Office, their luxurious and scandalous Lives; and by their eager Pursuit after Bishopricks, Deaneries, Pluralities, and large Livings, (after they have lied to the Holy Ghost, at their Admittance into holy Orders, in affirming, that it was the Direction of the Divine Spirit alone, and the Regard that they had for the Salvation of Souls, without a view to filthy Lucre, or secular Interest, that engag'd him to desire

fire the Office of a Priest) are the chief Occasion, of Irreligion and Immorality, is so very predominant among the Laity, that Atheism and Heretical Notions, are so very common, and that the avenging Hand of the Almighty is threatened to be stretch'd out upon a rebellious Nation.

I am not a little surpriz'd, that this our learned and ingenious Preacher, should in *P. 34*, reckon the Defence of Liberty, and Resistance against Tyranical Power, as propos'd in the *London Journal* of *December the 2d* ; as also a Confutation of the false and chimerical Notion of Sacrilege in the same Paper, *November the 25th*, in the Number of the crying Sins of the Age, and in the same Sentence with the *Arian* and *Socinian* Heresies.

WHAT the Author of those Papers has offered as his Opinion, is supported by incontestable Reason, and therefore stands upon too sure a Basis to be shaken by the puny Efforts of slavish Cant and Bigottry. If the former be Treason, as our surprizingly learned Politician

litician pretends, Mankind sure is placed in the most unhappy Circumstances, that possibly can be imagin'd, without any the least Expectations, or Hopes of ever being delivered from them, viz. *That whole Nations are form'd for the Diabolical Sport of a few, and obnoxious to eternal Damnation, if in the least they resist Infernal Practices, or enter upon Methods proper to redress themselves.* That Kings derive their Power immediately from the People, by whom they are constituted; that they are appointed for the Good only of the Society, and that the People by this their Appointment of him, enter into a Compact, to be obedient during the time of his legal Administration, are Propositions so self-evident, that none of common Understanding, can in the least question them.

Now, that the People, who intrusted a Prince for their present future Advantage, with Power, can resume the same, whenever they find, that he employs it to their Destruction, and that they can force him to resign it, if he opposes, are also evident; upon this Consideration, that in all Compacts, wherein

wherein one Party breaks thro' the Covenant, the other is free from the Obligation. Besides, 'tis supported by the great Law of Nature, viz. Self-Preservation, which our Author himself, in the first Paragraph of his Sermon, calls, *the most perswasive Motive in Nature*; and universally practised by all Nations, who were so unhappy as to be obliged to put it in Execution.

I therefore appeal to the common Sense of Mankind, to determine whether the mad Ravings of a fanatick Priest, bigotted to Party Tenets, and spirited with Indignation against the Truth, and indisputable Reason, founded on the eternal and immutable Laws of Nature, confirm'd by the Voice of all Nations, and put in Practice upon all proper Occasions, has the greatest semblance of Truth. If this be the Treason, as the judicious and reverend Mr. *Masse*y, affirms; what Account can we give of the Revolution, which was founded upon the Principles of Liberty and Resistance? What Excuse shall we make for the Behaviour of her late Majesty Queen *Anne*, the late Duke of *Ormond*,

mond, and the other Lords and the Commonality of these three Kingdoms, who accounted it their Honour, and gloried in being instrumental in that happy Change of State? And *Lastly*, What shall we think of our present Establishment both of Church and State, which are dependant upon it? Men of low Education, who all along have been dependant upon the Charity of others, or in a Servile manner, fed at great Mens Tables, very rarely entertain Notions of Liberty, but still retain what they imbib'd in a dejected State. Hence it is, that we are so often alarm'd with passive Obedience and Non-resistance. Hence it is, that the indifeasible Hereditary Right of Kings, is represented as Articles of Faith from the Pulpit; hence it is, that Sedition and Rebellion take their Rise. The groveling Mind of a Pensioner of a School or College, or the Chaplain of some dignified Bigot, may rant, rave, and vent his slavish Doctrine, to please a Mob or tickle the Fancy of some Bigot Lord; but the Great, the Prudent, and the Free-born Souls, disdain such abject slavish Thoughts, and bend their Endeavours
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for

for the Peace and Prosperity of their Country.

AFTER our wise Politician has run over his black List of Enormous Crimes, that threaten Vengeance upon this sinful Nation. He is pleas'd p. 35. to acquaint us that *he has been thinking what we already have to Plead in our Favour, and hopes we have some Reliance upon four Things, the second of which, according to him, is the commendable Zeal of some truly Noble and Christian Spirits, in the Cause of God against the Errors and Heresies which are sprung up amongst us; and in the Catalogue of these, he mentions the Right Reverend the Bishop of Oxford; the Dean of Chichester, Worcester, and Dr. Snape, for their Pieces against the Bishop of Bangor. With how much Justice he has done this; and what fair Pretensions or Claims they may have to that Character; upon this Account, I shall refer to the Reader to consider. They appear'd in the cause of an Error which if embrac'd, wou'd destroy the use of our Reason, and deprive us of the liberty of judging for our selves. But he maintain'd a Truth, deliver'd by the great*

great Author of our Salvation himself. They contended for the Monarchy, and enslaving of our Consciences by secular Force and Restraint ; but he boldly testified what is written, both in the Law of Nature, the old Dispensation ; and the Gospel and heroically oppos'd and overcame by strong and undeniable Reasons, the united Forces of all the Enemies of Truth. In a word, they were Combatants for the furious Zeal and persecuting Rage, that is too much caress'd by Papists, and other Sanguine Religioſo's ; but he imitating the Example of the meek and humble Jesus, exhorted to Moderation ; advanc'd the use of our most valuable Faculties, and gloriously defended the Cause of Liberty.

BEFORE I quit this Paragraph, I must take Notice of the unhandsome, and ungentleman like Method of introducing the Name of his Lordship used by this Author, *First*, in setting him in Opposition to those whom he accounts the *truly noble and Christian Spirits*. *Secondly*, in ranking him in the Number of such as are profess'd Hereticks. And *Thirdly*, in denying him that Title the

Church is pleas'd to make use of in their Devotions, which he has not as yet forfeited, and which our Author attaches to the Name of another Bishop, mentioned in the same Sentence. What other Reason there can be for this rude Treatment, a disagreeable Disposition of Mind, prepense Disrespect, and an uncomplaisant Behaviour; I know not, but sure I am, none of all these is according to the Mind of Jesus, or agreeable to the Directions of his Apostles. Such Deportment is highly unbecoming, even in private Lay-men, but much more in the Ministers of the Gospel; who in all their Actions, ought to demonstrate the Innocence of the Dove, by a forgiveness of Injuries, and forwardness to love their Enemies as their Friends.

To bring these Remarks to a Conclusion, let me only add, that by this Time (I am willing to believe) the Reader is pretty well appriz'd how just his Remonstrance is. *p. 34. Behold I have made an Evangelical Resentment of these Things; suffer it, I beseech you, ye Men of Power, to be as valid as a legal one.*
 Since

Since both the Law of Reason, and the Gospel are entirely opposite to those Notions, which he proposes as Evangelical Truths. How resolute and faithful has he been in the Performance of his Promise, made in the Beginning of his Discourse, of disclaiming all Hypocrisy and Dissimulation in his Representations of Matters of Fact, and the Truths of the Gospel: And how Genuine his Accounts of Treason, Sacrilege, and the Kingdom of Christ are. We therefore may well be surpriz'd, When (as he expresses himself in the Words of the Prophet, P. 30.) *we pass into the Temple of the Lord, and see the wonderful and horrible thing.* — *The Priests teaching for Hire, and the Prophets divining for Money, or Preferment; — suiting their Doctrines to the Times, and forbearing, at least, if not allowing the Vices of the Great and Powerful; Or as he represents the Case, P. 16. When they, whose peculiar Office it is, by their Life and Doctrine, to direct the People in the right Way, shall, to humour the Extravagancies of a depraved Age, suit their Doctrines to the Inclinations of their Hearers, and make the Word of God bend to serve the Purposes* of

of Ireligion ; when they advance nothing contrary to the Lusts and Passions of their Rulers, but through a fearful, unapostolical, slavish Compliance, call Evil good, and Good evil ; put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter ; when they wrest and torture Scripture to make it give an occasional Vote ; When they say, thus saith the Lord, and the Lord hath not said so ; such ungodly Prevaricators, like the Evil Angels among the Egyptians, are the pourers out of Wrath, Indignation, and Trouble.



FINIS.
